

Message Text

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21

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7235

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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TAGS: EAIR, ECAC, US, NL

SUBJECT: CHARTERS, THE DUTCH AND EUROPEAN UNITY

REF: PARIS 32443

SUMMARY. THE WAY THE DUTCH HAVE HANDLED THE CHARTER
DISCUSSIONS SUPPORTS EMBASSY PARIS'S VIEWS ON THE
REASONS FOR ECAC'S SOLID FRONT. WE OFFER A FEW MORE
OF OUR OWN. END SUMMARY.

EMPHASIS ON THE MULTILATERAL

1. WE WERE STRUCK BY EMBASSY PARIS'S OBSERVATION OF THE
SEEMING BLOODY-MINDEDNESS WITH WHICH ECAC HAS PURSUED
ITS DEMANDS IN THE FACE OF AMERICAN LOGIC AND SUPPORTING
DATA. EMBASSY PARIS COMMENTS THAT IT IS ALMOST AS THOUGH
ECAC WAS ASKING FOR CONCESSIONS FOR THEIR OWN SAKE AS
"A MEANS OF PRESSURING US TO CONSULT MORE CLOSELY IN
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THE FUTURE AND ENGAGE IN THE KIND OF INTIMATE DIALOGUE

ECAC SEEKS WITH US." THE ATTITUDE WHICH IS SO PERCEPTIVELY DESCRIBED SENT US BACK TO THE NOTES WE TOOK OF OUR INITIAL MEETING ON CHARTERS WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL RABEN OCTOBER 1 (THE HAGUE 5040) AND THE REMEMBERED EMPHASIS HE PLACED ON A MULTILATERAL APPROACH. ADMITTEDLY, THE APPEARANCE HE GAVEMAY HAVE BEEN A NEGOTIATING POSE, BUT IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS MORE THAN THAT. RABEN REFERRED TO THE DIFFICULTIES THE ECAC MEMBERS HAD HAD IN 1973 HANDLING CHARTER AGREEMENTS ON A BILATERAL BASIS, AND MADE CLEAR HIS BELIEF THAT THE EUROPEANS HAD BEEN PICKEDOFF ONE BY ONE BY THE U.S., TO THEIR DISADVANTAGE. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE BELGIANS, WHO HE SAID HAD SOUGHT A COMPETITIVE EDGE OVER THEIR NEIGHBORS BY BREAKING THE COMMON FRONT, ONLY TO FIND, WHEN OTHER ECAC COUNTRIES FOLLOWED THEIR EXAMPLE, THAT THEY HAD SIMPLY UNDERCUT EVERYONE'S POSITION AND GAINED THE OPPROBRIUM OF THEIR COLLEAGUES.

BREAKING (UP ON) THE FRONT

2. IT WAS WITH SOME UNEASINESS, THERFORE, THAT WE READ THE STATEMENT IN STATE 236009 THAT "U.S. STRATEGY CONTINUES TO CALL FOR BREAKING THE ECAC FRONT WHEREVER WE CAN." WE ADVISED AGAINST TRYING TO USE THE DUTCH AS A WEDGE (THE HAGUE 5110). THE POSITION SUBSEQUENTLY TAKEN BY THE NETHERLANDS, IN THE U.S.-ECAC MEETING OCTOBER 22-23 IN PARIS AND DURING THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS IN THE HAGUE OCTOBER 27, CONFIRMED THE IMPRESSION RABEN GAVE OF COMMITMENT TO A MULTILATERAL APPROACH. IN FACT, THE LINKAGE OF THE DUTCH TO ECAC WAS SO NOTICEABLE DURING THE HAGUE DISCUSSIONS THAT THE U.S. DELEGATION FELT COMPELLED TO NOTETHE INAPPROPRIATENESS OF TRYING TO NEGOTIATE ONE PARTICULAR MULTILATERAL ISSUE IN THE CONTECT OF BILATERAL TALKS.

3. IN THE NEARLY TWO MONTHS THAT HAVE PASSED SINCE OCTOBER 27, THE DUTCH HAVE SHOWN NO INCLINATION TO BREAK RANKS WITH ECAC. WHEN WE SOUGHT A 60-DAY EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING AGREEMENT, RABEN READILY ACCEPTED, BUT WHEN WE LATER ASKED FOR AN ADDITINAL 90 DAYS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE ANSWER WAS NEGATIVE, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THE EXTRA MONTHS WOULD HAVE CARRIED THE TWO COUNTRIES THROUGH THE DATES OF THE NEXT U.S.-ECAC MEETING MARCH 16-17. MOREOVER, ONE ONE-STOP-INCLUSIVE TOUR CHARTERS, WHILE AGREEING TO ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FROM CARRIERS NOW, RABEN STUCK TO 30-DAY PRELISTING CONDITION WHICH U.S. DELEGATION HAD CONSIDERED UNACCEPTABLE EARLIER, AND CALLED FOR REFERENCE PRICE SYSTEM.

4. THIS HISTORY SUGGESTS THAT AT LEAST THENETHER-
LANDS TAKES SERIOUSLY ITS OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN THE
COMMON ECAC POSITION. IF THE OTHER MEMBER STATES DO
THE SAME (AND IT NOW APPEARS THAT ALL SAVE SWITZERLAND
HAVE), EMBASSY PARIS'S HYPOTHESIS SEEMS CORRECT, THAT
THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE LITTLE TACTICAL INCENTIVE FOR
ECAC TO ABANDON ITS POSITION OF STRENGTH AND OFFER
FURTHER CONCESSIONS.

5. (ANOTHER OBSERVATION BY EMBASSY PARIS IS BORNE
OUT HERE, NAMELY THAT THE PROTRACTED SERIEES OF LETTER
EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ECAC HAS PROVIDED
ECAC A BODY OF WRITTEN PRECEDENT. DURING OUR MEETING
OCTOBER 1, RABEN TOOK NOTE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN VERES AND STYLES, COPIES OF WHICH HAD BEEN
SENT HIM BY VERES, AND CAUTIONED THAT HIS WILLINGNESS
TO MEET WITH THE U.S. TEAM ASSUMED THAT NO NEW ELEMENT
WOULD BE INJECTED BY THE U.S.-ECAC MEETING LATER IN
THE MONTH.)

DIVIDE AND FLOUNDER

6. A BROADER PERSPECTIVE MAY HELP US TO UNDERSTAND THE
DUTCH ATTITUDE. THIS HAS BEEN A TRYING YEAR DOMESTICALLY,
WITH THE GOVERNMENT FACING THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF UNEM-
PLOYMENT AND WORST GROWTH RATE SINCE THE WAR. ADDING
TO THE FRUSTRATION IS THE LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD
EUROPEAN UNITY, WHICH IS THE MAJOR HOPE THE DUTCH HAVE
TO INFLUENCE THE COUNTRIES WO MOST AFFECT THE NETHER-
LANDS. THE RAMBOUILLET ECONOMIC SUMMIT, WITH WHAT
FOEIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL CALLED ITS "ARBITRARY"
DESIGNATION OF PARTICIPANTS, STILL RANKLES GOVERNMENT
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LEADERS HERE. WE SHOULD BE AWARE, THEREFORE, THAT
THE DUTCH WATCH WHAT THE U.S. DOES, NOT JUST WHAT IT
SAYS, AND WHILE WE PROFESS TO SUPPORT EUROPEAN UNITY,
WE ARE SEEN SOMETIMES TO USE ITS LACK OF UNITY FOR
OUR AD HOC ADVANTAGE.

7. IN AVIATION, EVENTS OF THIS YEAR HAVE MADE THE
DUTCH ESPECIALLY CONSCIOUS OF THE POWER OF THE U.S.
ANDOF THE NEED FOR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO MEET IT
WITH A COMMON FRONT. THE FOUR-NATION CONSORTIUM THAT
CONTRACTED TO BUY THE F-16 OBTAINED A BETTER DEAL THAN
COULD ANY ACTING ALONE. YET THE CHOICE WAS OF AN AMER-
ICAN OVER A EUROPEAN FIGHTER, A FACT FOR WHICH THE DUTCH
MAY WISH TO COMPENSATE BY BEING DETERMINEDLY EUROPEAN
ON OTHER AVIATION ISSUES. ONE AREA IN WHICH SOME EUR-

OPEAN COUNTRIES HAD EXPERIENCE ONLY THIS YEAR IN CONCERT-
ING THEIR POSITIONS BEHIND THE SCENES WAS, IRONICALLY,
IN DEALING WITH THE U.S. EFFORT TO NEGOTIATE A BETTER
DEAL FOR OUR SCHEDULED AIRLINES. THE DUTCH DO NOT
NEED LONG MEMORIES TO LOOK BACK TO THE LAST TIME WE
TRIED TO USE THEM TO SET A COURSE. OUR ATTEMPT TO MAKE
AN EXAMPLE OF KLM SUCCEEDED, BUT NOT AS WE INTENDED.

GIVE IT A TRY

8. TO SUM UP, THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL DEPTH OF FEELING
BACK OF THE DUTCH STANCE ON THE CHARTER ISSUE. EVEN
IF WE SUCCEED EVENTUALLY IN BREAKING THE ECAC FRONT
WITH MORE THAN SWITZERLAND, AND THUS FORCING THE
DUTCH TO ABANDON THE ECAC LINE, WE WILL BE SOWING A
RICH CROP OF RESENTMENT. WHY NOT DO AS EMBASY
PARIS SUGGESTS, "GIVE EXPLORATION OF THE MULILATERAL
APPRACH A TRY."
GOULD

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